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Senate passes legislation to expand business and job opportunities for private labs

LANSING – The approximate 90 commercial labs that do environmental testing would have more chances to work on state contracts resulting in more job opportunities under legislation passed Wednesday in the Senate, Sen. Patty Birkholz announced.

The legislation would create a voluntary lab data quality recognition program for all those labs who wish to be considered eligible for state lab work contracts. Under Senate Bill 1133, labs would be able to submit their data to be compared against uniform performance standards before bidding on state jobs.

“This recognition program will help the state be assured that data being received from private companies is of top quality,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, sponsor of the bill. “In addition, giving some of the DEQ’s lab work to private companies will certainly help to provide more job opportunities for Michigan’s residents.” Birkholz estimates that this legislation will mean a potential increase in private lab work of over \$2 million annually.

The legislation is part of the Republican’s JOBS Action Plan, a broad Republican initiative for revitalizing Michigan’s economy. JOBS continues the effort of the initial JOBS plan by creating new job opportunities, saving existing jobs, and promoting a friendlier and healthier business climate in Michigan.

Senator Birkholz’ legislation is tiebarred to SB 1135 which creates a special advisory council to study the new lab quality data recognition program and review its effectiveness and cost efficiency.

“Allowing private labs more access to state contract work will provide a much-needed boost to Michigan’s economy and environment,” said Birkholz, chairperson of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. “It also allows the DEQ more flexibility to ensure quality testing of our natural resources.”